

Greenbelt Community Bear Hug

Bear-themed arts and activities. Things to make, do, and view!

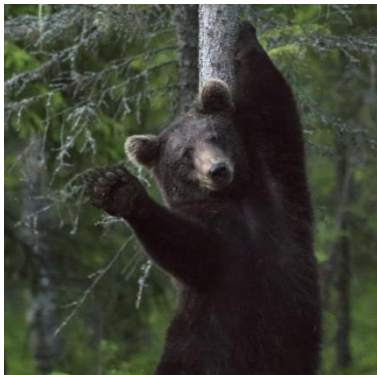


UTE BEAR DANCES (Colorado/Utah region, U.S.A.)

In Ute tradition, the first rumblings of thunder each year awaken the bears from hibernation and mark the arrival of spring. Lore holds that a bear who was scratching against a tree after a long winter's nap taught to a tribal ancestor a dance that has been performed for *over 500 years!* Bears are associated in Ute culture with curing sickness and communicating with the spirit world.

Historically, the Bear Dance played an important role in helping the Ute people select life partners, but contemporary celebrations emphasize community and season.

Everyone is welcome to participate, regardless of age or marital status. Bear dances are typically held in late May or early June. The dancing, music and socializing can continue for 4-5 days, culminating in a feast. There's even an endurance contest between the singers and dancers! To help us get in the mood for some bear-themed art, let's start with a [sample Bear Dance video](#).



MAKE A BEAR DANCE OF YOUR OWN

It could be a solo, or kids might like to make a dance with siblings. To inspire your movement, [watch bears scratching against trees](#) . Will you dance in an open space, or maybe with your back against a wall or another dancer? Here's a fun, [short piece of music](#) by Les Claypool that might evoke a romp in an enchanted forest – or you can choose your own music.

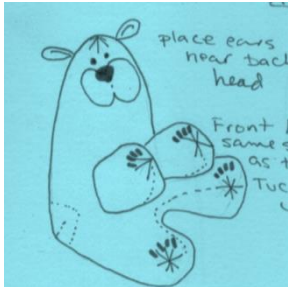
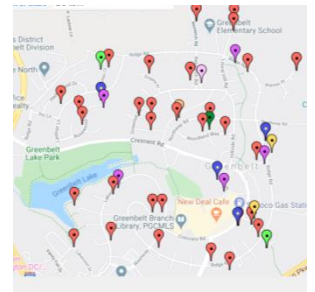
Did you know...
the Greenbelt
Middle School
mascot is a bear!



WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT

[Neighborhood "bear hunts" have proliferated](#) around the world this spring. Neighbors have placed teddy bears and other stuffed animals in their windows for children to find while walking or riding by and observing physical distancing guidelines. The hunts are inspired by the picture book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury. Hear Greenbelt Recreation instructor [Judy Goldberg-Strassler reading the story](#) from her pop-up book!

Greenbelter Bev Parisi created an interactive map of the bears spotted in Greenbelt and has shared it [on Facebook](#). Can you spot any bears in *your* neighborhood? Maybe you would like to make a bear and display it in your window for others to find; it might be a stuffed bear or a drawing. Here are a few ideas:

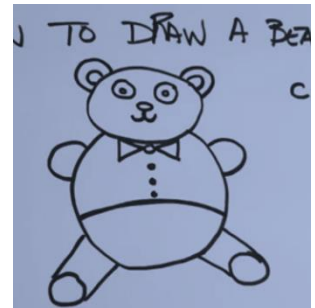


MAKE A STUFFED BEAR

You may be familiar with sock monkeys. Greenbelt Recreation ARTS instructor Carol Pettruci has worked out a variation on that project: make a small stuffed BEAR out of a sock! See Carol's [tutorial video](#) and refer to her to [illustrated notes](#). What you'll need: sock, scissors, needle, thread, stuffing, safety pins, and a skewer or similar tool.

DRAW A TEDDY BEAR

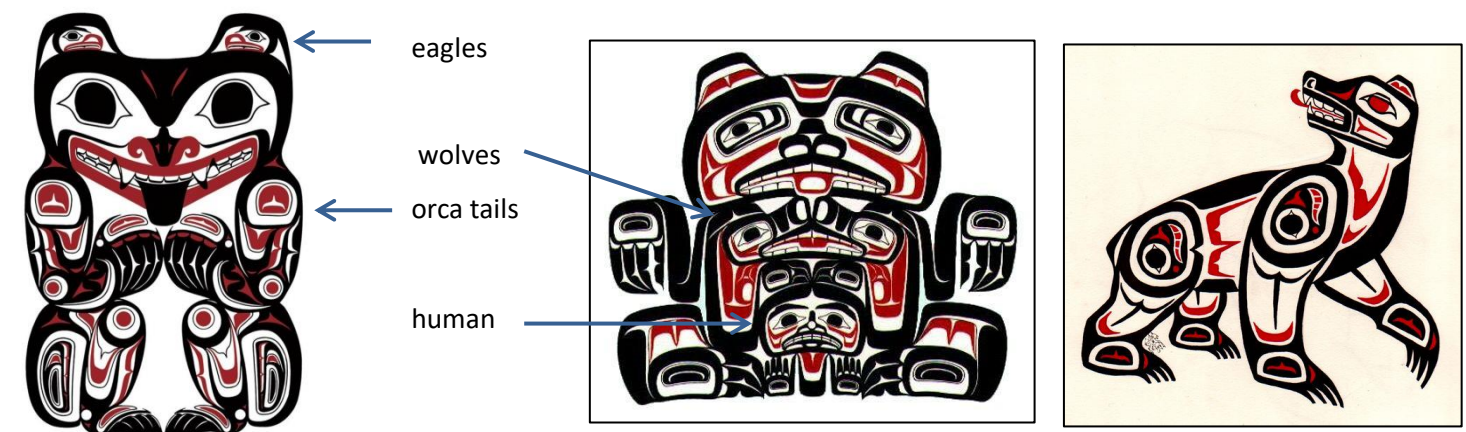
A simple approach for young artists to do with any drawing tool. Greenbelt Recreation ARTS instructor Racquel Keller provides [step-by-step instruction](#) showing how to build a new form out of familiar shapes.



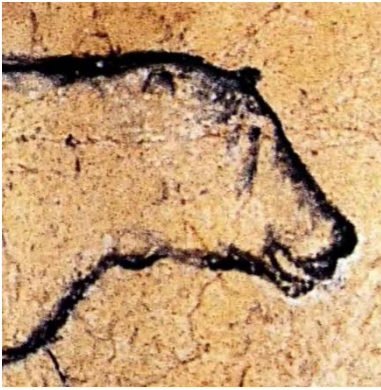
DRAW A BEAR: HAIDA HIDDEN PICTURES (British Columbia, Canada)

Bears are a common motif in traditional 2D and 3D artwork of the Haida and other first nations in the Pacific northwest region of North America. The bear is regarded as the most powerful animal and a protector, and is sometimes referred to as an Elder Kinsman.

Pacific northwest style offers a fun challenge for older kids and adults who enjoy using bold, solid media like markers, ink or gouache. The style is distinguished by crisp lines, a limited color palette, symmetry (for frontal compositions), and a "hidden picture" aspect: the decorative patterns inside the main form include parts of other living or mythological creatures with symbolic significance. Maybe the bear you create will include hidden pictures of the people and animals that live in your home or your neighborhood!



By Clarence Mills

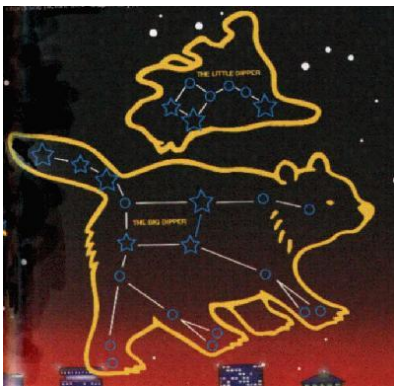


DRAW A BEAR: CAVE ART STYLE

Bears have been depicted in art for a VERY long time. These paintings were made on the walls of the Chauvet Cave in France more than *30,000 year ago*! Get a peek at the cave – and its replica -- [here](#), and see more in the documentary feature film “The Cave of Forgotten Dreams” by Werner Herzog ([trailer](#)).

The cave paintings are distinguished by their emphasis on graceful, fluid outlines, side views and the suggestion of motion. This style can be fun to replicate with soft drawing materials like charcoal and pastels. If you have a cork in the house, a grown-up can burn the top and then you can draw with the charred end. The pigments used for the cave paintings were made from crushed stone in shades of red, brown and black. These images don’t have much shading, but you can add as much or as little shading to your bear drawing as you wish.

Before you draw your bear, you’ll want to create a “ground” to suggest the color and texture of the cave wall. Here’s one way to do that: cover your paper with stone-colored pastel chalk; smooth out the marks with the corner of a rag or paper towel; spritz the paper with water; crumple it up; then open it up and let it dry on an old towel or on a picnic table. If the water and pastel pool in places, you can dab them with the rag or paper towel. You can draw on the paper while it is still slightly damp for a silkier line.



BEAR HUNT IN THE NIGHT SKY

Look for Ursa Major – the Great Bear, which incorporates the Big Dipper! Ursa Minor, the Little Bear (aka the Little Dipper), is close by, but harder to see unless the sky is very dark. The handles of the two dippers are the bears’ tails.

Compiled by [Greenbelt Recreation ARTS](#). Send photos of your bear art and dances to ndewald@greenbeltmd.gov. Photos may be shared online.